



JOHN DRISCOLL

State Representative, 6th District

Dear Friends and Neighbors, Winter 2010

Even in a bustling economy, creating jobs and helping to maintain a healthy business climate should be a top priority of any lawmaker. Today, when unemployment is hovering between nine and 10 percent, getting people back to work takes on an even greater urgency.

Good people can and do disagree about what the best way is to boost employment and revive a sluggish economy. Cut business taxes and eliminate regulations to grow the bottom line? Increase government spending on public projects to benefit the entire community? Provide financial incentives to companies that hire workers from the unemployment rolls? Give tax exemptions to companies thinking about moving operations to our state?

Every one of those ideas is valid . . . and every one of them has drawbacks. I’ve discovered since going to work as your state representative that no idea, no vote, no public stand is going to be met with universal acceptance. That’s what our democracy is all about, but it is also why working together and reaching across party lines are so vital at a time when our economy is so strained and divisions in our society are so deep and wide.

I’m writing this note just as the 2010 legislative session is beginning. No one at this point can claim to know what the results of the session will be, or what the final state budget will look like. With the state looking at a \$2.6 billion budget hole, it’s clear that there will be more significant cuts in public services, to go along with the \$4.5 billion that we had to cut last year. These will be painful for many of our citizens, and few lawmakers will take these actions lightly.

It is also clear that there will likely be efforts to increase state revenues. You’ve heard talk about new taxes or increased taxes. I’ve heard the same talk. I’m not ready to go that route, myself. I still believe that with input from citizens from Spokane, from throughout eastern Washington, and from the population centers on the west side of the mountains, we can have the best chance to put together a balanced and responsible budget that works. It won’t be perfect. These aren’t perfect times. But if it helps us move in the right direction, I think everyone in the state will have something to like about it.

I know this is a cliché, but please: Send me your ideas. Tell me what you support, and what you reject. Our Spokane community can help shape the state for years to come, if we make our voices heard now.

Sincerely,


John Driscoll
Proud representative of the 6th legislative district

PRSRPT STD
US POSTAGE PAID
WA STATE DEPT
OF PRINTING 98501

Rep. John Driscoll
122E Legislative Building
P.O. Box 40600
Olympia WA 98504-0600

Printed on recycled paper

- A Letter from Olympia -

What am I working on, besides budget, budget and budget?

When I asked you to hire me for this job, I told you my priorities would be jobs, education and health care improvements to make Spokane a better place to live, work, and raise our families. It's true that the state budget is the 800-pound gorilla in Olympia this session, but those priorities remain at the top of my list.

The only change: my growing understanding of how closely those three issues are linked here in Spokane. They are so intertwined that it's almost impossible to write about them under separate headings, so I'll just tell you a few of the things I'm working on this session -- besides the budget itself.

A full-fledged medical school for Spokane

The WWAMI (Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho) medical education program helps promising students from a five-state area prepare to be trained as physicians at the University of Washington. It's been a great success. As it now stands, students can take their first year of med school here in Spokane before moving on to Seattle to continue. For many reasons, a four-year medical school here at home makes good sense, and it's one of the goals I'm working on as a member of the House Higher Education Committee. The benefits of such a school? Directly and indirectly, thousands of jobs. More doctors and nurses and medical technicians providing better access to health care throughout our community. Increased prestige and visibility for our region, drawing more businesses.



Strong schools, healthy children, a more robust economy

As a father and a grandfather, I know as well as anyone that healthy kids do better in school. Successful students have a far better chance of becoming successful adults. As vice-chair of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee, I'm working to expand health care opportunities for all our children. And as a member of the Insurance Commissioner's Health Care Reform Realization Committee, I'm working to help Washington take advantage of every positive aspect of the federal health-care reform that, like it or not, is most likely on the way.

Helping small businesses survive, thrive and grow

Nearly 80 people representing Spokane-area Chambers of Commerce came to Olympia to visit with me and other members of the region's legislative delegation the first week of session. We all know that our small businesses are the heart of our economy, and I was grateful to have the Chambers' input, and to share with them my goals. Any recovery efforts that place extra burdens on this vital segment of our economy is no recovery at all, and I will continue to advocate for our community's employers and entrepreneurs.

6th District Town Halls

Saturday, February 20 • Spokane

Northwood Middle School
13120 N. Pittsburg

10 am – 12 noon

Hamblen Elementary
2121 E. Thurston Ave.

2 pm – 4 pm

I hope you'll join me and Sen. Chris Marr when we escape Olympia for a few hours to meet with 6th-district constituents midway through the session. We'll report on what has happened so far, we'll do our best to answer your questions, and we'll take your comments and suggestions back to the Capitol with us as the session enters the home stretch.

Rep. John Driscoll • 6th District
Driscoll.john@leg.wa.gov

<http://www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/members/driscoll/index.asp>
360-789-7962